

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson****H.R. 1680: "Secure Handling of Ammonium Nitrate Act of 2007"**

March 29, 2007 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity and Science and Technology Subcommittee markup for H.R. 1680, the "Secure Handling of Ammonium Nitrate Act of 2007":

"Our goal in introducing this legislation is to keep this valuable fertilizer available to farmers across the country, and at the same time take the necessary measures to help provide additional security for ammonium nitrate fertilizer and not unduly burden agricultural professionals or farmers use this fertilizer for legitimate use.

Ammonium nitrate fertilizer, the focus of this mark-up, is vital to the U.S. plant food industry, its many local retail agribusiness outlets and the farmers and livestock producers they serve. Ammonium nitrate is valued by our nation's farmers for its uses on pasture lands, citrus and specialty crops and for its use in no-till farming. In 2004, nationwide consumption of ammonium nitrate totaled 1.5 million tons. During that same time, Mississippi farmers consumed 59,000 tons of ammonium nitrate.

There is an ammonium nitrate plant in my District, in Yazoo City, Mississippi, that has been in operation for more than 50 years. This facility provides a major boost to the local economy, providing good-paying and stable job opportunities. At the Yazoo City facility, Terra employs 201 fulltime employees with an annual payroll of \$12.5 million. They have 19 additional security related contract employees. Terra Mississippi Nitrogen has an annual production capacity of 500,000 tons of anhydrous ammonia, the basic ingredient for most nitrogen fertilizers and many industrial products. They upgrade this ammonia to 775,000 tons of ammonium nitrate; 600,000 tons of urea ammonium nitrate (UAN), and 7,000 tons of urea.

Ammonium nitrate has been an effective nutrient source for agricultural crops for many years. As useful as this chemical can be, it can be even more devastating when used for harm instead of good. I am pleased that we are able to tighten our control of ammonium nitrate to ensure that this product stays out of the hands of terrorists, yet is still available for crop nutrition purposes. These regulations are another of our on-going homeland security efforts of preventing a future terrorist attack on our nation."

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